



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Redevelopment Board Minutes 01/07/2008**

**Arlington Redevelopment Board**  
**Minutes of January 7, 2008**

Members Present: Andrew West  
 Edward Tsoi  
 Roland Chaput  
 Christopher Loreti  
 Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien  
 Laura Wiener  
 Joey Glushko

The Board convened in the Selectmen's Chamber to meet with the Selectmen, Selectmen chair, Annie LaCourt, cited interest in discussion of ARB Warrant Articles, and a report on the Symmes project. Chairman, Andrew West stated that warrant articles were informed and driven largely by agenda for commercial revitalization and proceeded to describe ARB's initiatives regarding commercial revitalization:

- \* Public space improvement in focus areas
- \* Storefront Improvement Program
- \* Signage
- \* Shared parking
- \* Green buildings

Diane Mahon added a comment about the importance of industrial sites. She mentioned the need for bus parking spaces in order to increase tourism (possible at Schwamb Mill and/or at the Jefferson Cutter House). Kevin Greeley added the need for public restrooms. Ms. Mahon continued saying that we should make sure to include the businesses on Broadway, and Warren Streets. She hoped the ARB would look at the 1000 Islands area at the corner of Mystic and Medford and inquired about any relationship between the Symmes project and finishing the Summer Street reconstruction. Diane Mahon suggested the next meeting with Selectmen could be March 31.

Regarding parking, Kevin Greeley inquired about employee parking at the Sunrise lot in the Heights. Kevin O'Brien reported that it seems to be a problem again and staff will look into it. He also mentioned problems with Trader Joe's and Walgreen's. It was pointed out that fire lane on Mass. Ave. next to Starbucks will be removed, creating more parking.

Clarissa Rowe asked for a report on Symmes: a checklist of what's been promised. She also suggested that the Town get Bill Reed to talk to Selectmen and ARB on Green towns. She indicated that in redoing the streetscape design in Arlington Center, we should look at the park in front of Dallin Museum. She believes there are too many trees and that history should be emphasized. It could be better utilized. She expressed concern about the proliferation of banks which eats parking but does not give vitality.

Annie LaCourt then asked Ed Starr of the Transportation Advisory Committee to talk about the status of traffic issues associated with the Symmes project. He indicated that there would be a meeting about the issues the next day to talk about some outstanding issues such as the timing of lights on Summer Street at intersection with Mill and the sidewalk between Grove St. and Oak Hill Dr. He also emphasized that the TAC should be involved in any parking studies the ARB undertakes.

Annie LaCourt thanked the ARB for their efforts and asked that they not forget other important issues such as open space, affordable housing, and the intensity of development.

The Board recessed to move to the second floor conference room in the Town Hall Annex to continue its meeting. Andy West invited Doug Manz and John Greeley of Symmes Redevelopment Associates to give an update on the Symmes project. Doug Manz introduced Atty. Josh Davis to discuss the regulatory agreements for the 120% housing. After a brief discussion to makes sure the agreements contained all the provisions that the Board and the Selectmen had previously discussed, Roland Chaput moved that the Board approve the Regulatory Agreement and Declaration of Restrictive Covenants. Chris Loreti seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Doug Manz then reported that demolition of the hospital was underway with most of the activity contained within the building at this point. Soon they would begin tearing down the building from the outside. They did not have a permit for the demolition of the nurses residence building yet as they are working out a memorandum of agreement with Mass. Historical Commission containing the actions they promised to do to preserve some historical record of the building.

They reported that they had submitted building permit applications for the entire project and had received a permit for one of the foundations. They have scheduled the next neighborhood meeting for February 11. This meeting is to describe the next two phases of the project: site work and building construction. Chris Loreti asked if there were any Town decisions holding up the project. Doug Manz replied in the negative. Chris Loreti then asked about the medical office building. Doug Manz replied that they had not had any recent encouragement, but were hopeful that when the nurses building was demolished and the site prepared and the housing construction begun, they would find greater interest in the site. When asked about the March 29 date at which time the Board must decide whether to take back the M O B property or give SRA nine more months to market the site, Doug Manz indicated that they were pretty sure they would want more time but would know better in a couple of months.

The Board asked SRA to make their next report to them on February 25 and to provide a written progress report prior to the meeting.

Ed Tsoi asked if they had looked at alternatives to a simple medical office building. Doug Manz reported that they had entertained a wellness center concept and had looked at other alternatives.

At 8:05 Andy West opened the public hearing on the amendment of the special permit for 1398 – 1406 Mass. Ave. Len Bierbrier, developer, Casey Pichet, developer, Dick Keshian Attorney, and David Chilinski, architect were present. The amendment was requested by the Arlington Redevelopment Board and proposed to reduce the number of required parking spaces in order that the spaces may be made larger. David Chilinski presented a modified plan for the parking that had 69 spaces with only 20% at the compact car size and all the compact spaces were 8 feet wide which is the new size requirement. The plan placed two new spaces in front of the dumpster which will require management on the part of the building owner.

The developer then discussed the brick sidewalk in front of the new building. Staff is still checking on the Selectmen's policy that says no new brick sidewalks should be built. Len Bierbrier next spoke about the Sunrise parking lot that is intended for Heights business employees saying that it seems to be being used by others. After a discussion about ways to control the use of the lot, Kevin O'Brien said he would look into the situation.

David Chilinski next presented drawings of proposed signage as part of the 100% plan review. The Board did not like the signs and asked the developer to try again and provide a design that incorporates more detail on the building facade. The Board then indicated its informal approval of the parking plan and continued the hearing to 8PM on March 3, 2008. The Board asked staff to check the parking plan (which had been submitted just that night) for compliance with zoning.

The Board then briefly discussed the commercial revitalization and storefront improvement program and determined to call the effort the "Arlington Commercial Revitalization Initiative".

At 9:45, Andy West then asked the Board to take up the proposed warrant articles and determine which ones it wants to submit for the warrant. The Board voted as follows on the articles. (Article numbers are assigned by the Department on the draft for convenience and do not reflect actual Town Meeting warrant article numbers.)

Article 1 to give Director of Planning approval of sign application: Chris Loreti moved approval, Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 2 to allow neon signs by sign permit or special permit: Chris Loreti moved approval, Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 3 to allow bracket and blade signs by sign permit or special permit: Chris Loreti moved approval, Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 4 to allow sandwich board signs by special permit: Roly Chaput moved that the article not be submitted, Chris Loreti seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 5 and 6 were discussed as one, #5 to make a correction in Section 6.13 and 6 to make a correction in Section 7.03 of the Zoning Bylaw: Chris Loreti moved approval of both, Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 7 to exempt from parking requirements seasonal outdoor seating: The Board amended the language to specify that the seating in question is "restaurant seating": Chris Loreti moved approval, Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 8 to add a new standard regarding sustainable building and site design techniques by which environmental design review applications are evaluated: Roly Chaput moved approval, Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 9 to control the use of temporary signs, describing additional forms and uses of temporary signs: Bruce Fitzsimmons moved approval, Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 10 to allow the parking requirement for projects subject to environmental design review to be met by private off-site parking spaces: Chris Loreti moved approval with an amendment to eliminate a proposed reduction in the parking requirement: Ed Tsoi seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 11 to submit home rule legislation (not a Zoning Bylaw amendment) to make housing intended to be affordable for families making up to 120% of median permanently affordable: Chris Loreti moved approval with an amendment to remove the reference to housing at the Symmes project so as to apply to any such housing in the future: Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Article 12 to prohibit the use of lighted box signs with light colored backgrounds: Ed Tsoi moved to not submit the article, Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin J. O'Brien